

Agenda Item 49.

TITLE	Budget Scrutiny Briefing
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 February 2019
WARD	None Specific;
DIRECTOR	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers

OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY

Effective budget scrutiny can assist the Council in identifying areas of concern within its finances. The Committee can make recommendations to the Executive to help develop an effective budget policy. Overview and Scrutiny is one of the checks and balances that the Council has at its disposal in order ensure that the policies and plans that the Council pass are suitable and effective for the Borough's residents.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:

- 1) note the Local Government Association (LGA) briefing notes and the verbal presentation given on the evening;
- 2) outline specific areas within budget scrutiny where further briefings or training would be useful;
- 3) consider a timeline for the scrutiny review of the development of the 2020/21 budget.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

The report contains two LGA Councillor workbooks that assist Members to deliver effective budget scrutiny of Local Authority finances. The 2018/19 MTFP is also attached as a practical example of a Local Government financial plan. Members will receive a briefing on the Council's budget setting process as a precursor to a scrutiny review of the 2020/21 budget.

Background

The Committee's terms of reference include the monitoring and review of the Council's revenue and capital budget. Members suggested that the Committee take a more active role in the overview and scrutiny of the 2020/21 budget setting process during the next municipal year. Members of the Committee had asked for training and briefing sessions to be organised to allow the Committee to be able to probe and question areas of concern within future budget setting proposals.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council continues to face severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of reductions to public sector funding and growing pressures in our statutory services. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions of approximately £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	N/A	N/A	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	N/A	N/A	N/A

Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

N/A

Cross-Council Implications

N/A

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

N/A

List of Background Papers

N/A

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